

## DIVE SITES AND MARINE LIFE



Kandolhu is perfectly located in Ari atoll to explore the dozens of dive sites close to our island and even more further afield. Within an hour by boat we can reach over 30 dive sites including 4 protected marine areas!

The closest dive site (besides our beautiful house reef of course!) is charming Kandolhu thila, a mere 5 minutes boat ride away! Each individual dive site offers its own appeal and is characterised by its structure, size, current exposure and its particular diversity of marine life.

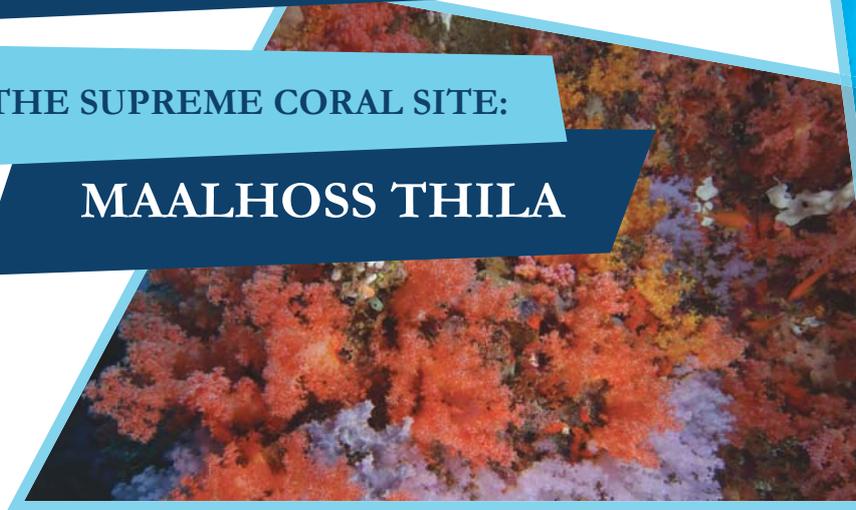
From Kandolhu you can dive deep channels, gigantic and tiny thilas, wrecks and long reefs, some with blasting current and with all the excitement of swirling activity and spectacular marine life, some at a gentle drift or none at all, granting you time to stop, pause and search for the small and obscure; swim through overhangs and caverns blossoming with soft corals and thread your way through narrow canyons squeezed between massive coral blocks; swim eye to eye with large reef sharks, lie on the sand barely breathing, as a huge manta is cleaned directly above your head, watch a turtle slowly feed oblivious to your presence, finally find the elusive frogfish directly in front of you – you can experience all from Kandolhu.



## TWELVE CLASSIC DIVE SITES ACCESSIBLE FROM KANDOLHU

THE SUPREME CORAL SITE:

### MAALHOSS THILA



Also known as Blue Caves, Maalhoss is an amazingly beautiful coral site on the west. Healthy hard corals steal the show on top while stunning soft corals which hang like multi-coloured bunches of grapes in the numerous overhangs and caves are the definite highlights deeper. Simply

breathtaking! Besides the spectacular corals you can also see the small and larger marine life that roams these waters. The optimal experience will be found diving to advanced open water depths. This site can be tricky in stronger current.



THE ADRENALINE PACKED:

### HAFZA THILA



Also known as the shark point, Hafza Thila is a small coral formation that rises from ocean floor to 10 metres below the surface. The current splits on one side of this coral structure and is where you will find all the action; numerous grey reef sharks cruise by, White Tip Reef Sharks glide in the current and massive tuna hunt

the vast schools of fusiliers. If you are lucky you can even see Grey Reef Sharks being cleaned by tiny cleaner fish. On top of Hafza Thila you can discover baby White Tip Reef sharks hiding underneath healthy table corals, Scorpion Fish concealed in plain sight and colourful small critters.

TWELVE CLASSIC DIVE SITES ACCESSIBLE FROM KANDOLHU

THE LEGENDARY DUO:

MAAYA THILA (PMA), FISHHEAD (PMA)



These well-established Protected Marine Areas (PMA) are the 2 most famous dive sites in North Ari Atoll. For decades they have been known as the top spots to encounter Grey Reef sharks and a high density of fish. Even though diving on these thilas can be difficult if the current is running, the fish life you will

experience on these spots will more than make up for it. Home to big schools of fusiliers, batfish and bannerfish these "underwater-mountains" attract plenty of trevally, tuna and snapper. Besides sharks, you can often find often turtles, stone- and scorpion fish as well as colourful Nudibranchs living on the reefs.

THE FAMOUS WRECK:

FESDU WRECK

This beautiful wreck is a former coastal fishing trawler of about 30m in length. It has stood in its final resting place at 30m depth for over 30 years; in that time the wreck has become beautifully overgrown with corals; black coral bushes are home to longnose-hawkfish, anemones protecting clown- and damselfish and in almost all cavities you will find schools of glass fish. The wreck lies at the foot of a tiny, but incredibly beautiful thila that rises up to 12 metres below the surface. Here you will often find colourful nudibranch, slugs, flatworms, octopus, scorpionfish and even frogfish can be discovered by the observant diver. However don't spend all your time just peering into the reef because mantas



use the cleaner fish on top of the thila during certain times of the year. The entire reeftop is covered in pristine corals, anemones and finger sponges.

**THE SUBLIME:**

**KANDOLHU HOUSE REEF**



Discover the jewel that the island Kandolhu hides below its indigo waters. The stunning reef that encircles this small island is a unique habitat with a high diversity of marine life; from the giant and majestic manta to the friendly resident hawksbill turtles to the tiny yet colourful squid shrimp and everything in between

– all can be seen here. There are multiple entries and exits you can use and different directions you can swim, let us guide your way or if you are an experienced buddy team lead your own adventure of discovery.

**THE CELEBRATED:**

**MOOFUSHI MANTA POINT**

Located on the border of South and North Ari atoll, Moofushi is the perfect place to encounter the majestic giants of the Indian Ocean: Manta Rays. These huge rays gather on this cleaning station to dance in a circular motion while busy cleaner wrasse scrub their bodies. These small fish enjoy a "buffet" lunch by removing leftovers from the Mantas' massive mouths and by cleaning parasites from the Mantas' bodies. From December to April, this spectacular underwater display should be on every divers bucket list!



Of course, Mantas are not the only ones populating these rich waters: white tip and grey reef sharks, together with Napoleon wrasse and schools of snappers as well as Tuna and Trevally cruise along the Moofushi plateau all year round. Please ask us about this "once in a lifetime" opportunity!

TWELVE CLASSIC DIVE SITES ACCESSIBLE FROM KANDOLHU

THE MAGNIFICENT:  
**HAMMERHEAD SHARK POINT**

As the sun starts to rise above the horizon we descend in the blue waters of Rasdhoo atoll. There is no reef, nor bottom to see, just the bright blue plankton that reflect the dawn light like a starry night. We dive to a maximum depth of 30 metres looking for the elusive hammerhead shark. This critically endangered shark is on many divers bucket list because there are very few places in the world we can still encounter these sharks in their natural environment. Sometimes we find other pelagic fish like the giant manta ray, the smaller mobula



ray, sailfish and wahoo. If the currents are in our favour we can end our dive on the world class madivaru reef that boasts an incredible variety of marine life. This trip, due to the distance, is only offered as a safari trip or private charter; please ask us about this opportunity!



THE CLASSICS:

**DONKALO THILA AND HIMENDHOO THILA**

These are a superb pair of bigger thilas on the west side of North Ari Atoll and therefore perfect for a nice drift dive even with stronger currents. Particularly on the south-west area of these thilas you have beautifully colourful overhangs decorated with exquisite soft corals and schools of bright sweetlips. Along the reef, sharks patrol their territory as big

schools of trevally and tuna hunt the schools of smaller fish. Big napoleon wrasse and schools of eagle rays are often seen swimming in the blue. In the winter months you can often have a close encounter with the gentle giants of the Indian Ocean as Manta rays come here for cleaning.

**THE BENCHMARK:**

**BATHALAA MAAGAA KANTHILA**



Bathalaa Maagaa Kanthila is much more than just a difficult name to pronounce for most non Dhivehi speakers; it is a classic Maldivian channel dive. This coral ridge starts at 5 metres depths and extends down to 30 metres into a channel on the

east side of North Ari Atoll. Big napoleon wrasse, grey reef sharks, white tip reef sharks, turtles, schools of eagle rays and big tuna can be seen all along the reef. This is the perfect place to employ your reef hook and feel like you are parachuting underwater. Hook yourself in and watch the cinema of reef-life play before your eyes as grey reef sharks cruise by in large numbers and numerous little fish try their best to swim against the current and feed on the plankton that flows through the channel. Since most of your dive will be spend around 20m it is best experienced diving on Nitrox (don't hesitate to enquire about Nitrox).



**THE TIMELESS:**

**HOHOLA THILA**

Hohola thila is a prime spot for anyone who loves beautiful, colourful coral reefs with even more colourful fish. The top of this stunning thila starts 6 metres below the surface and it slopes down to more than 30m. The whole reef structure is surrounded by multitudes and masses of schooling fish and covered in corals and blue finger sponges. Here you normally find all kind of colourful nudibranch, flatworms, stone- and scorpion fish,

longnose-hawkfish, mantis Shrimp and sometimes we encounter a turtle, shark or rays.

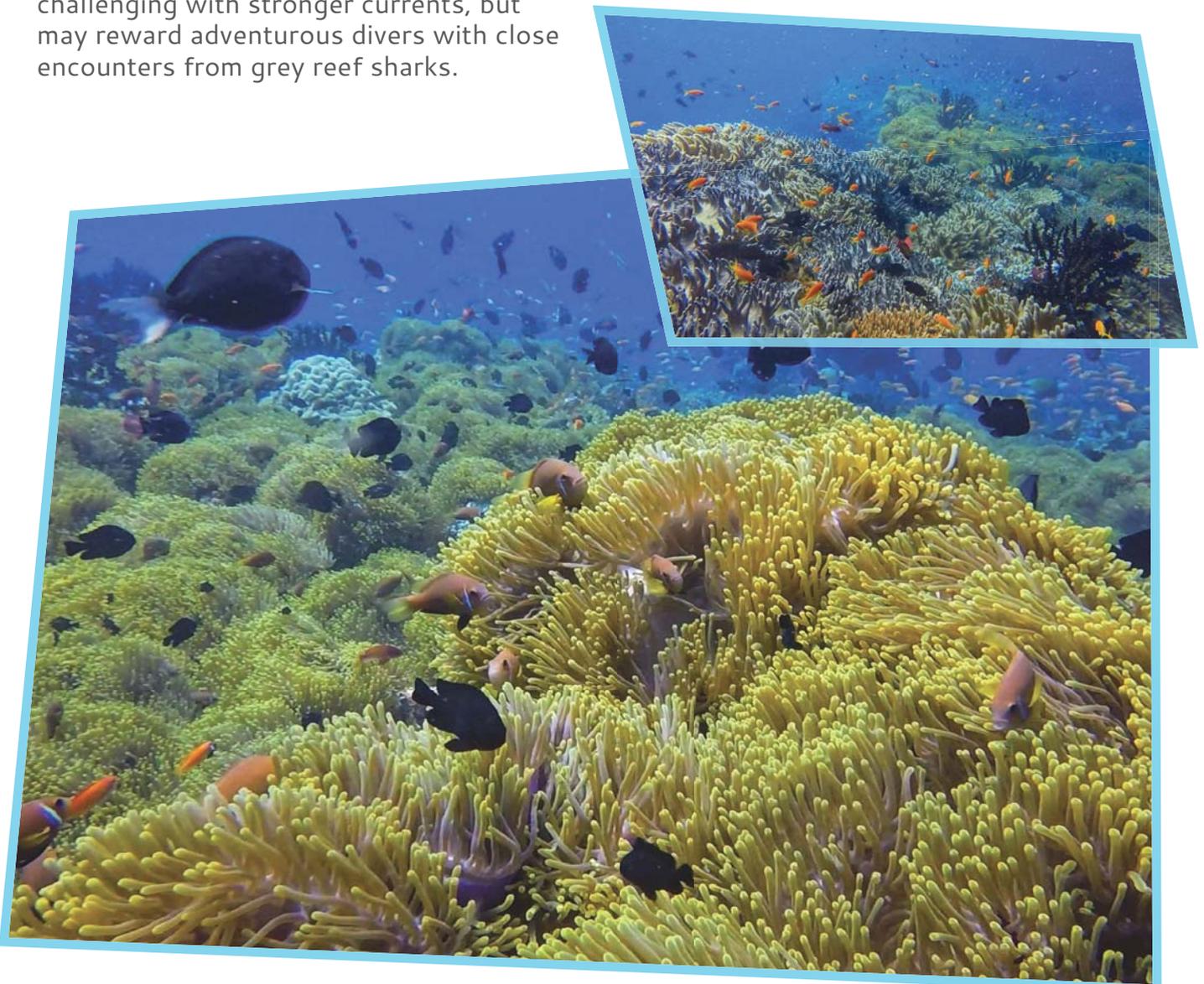
Hohola is a perfect place for the photographers amongst us because of the light to moderate currents we usually experience here, which allow us the breathing space to capture that perfect shot.

THE BEDAZZLING:

## ORIMAS THILA

Orimas is a wonderful small thila that pulsates with vibrant fish life and stunning hard- and soft corals. This Marine Protected Area features overhangs, caves, and canyons clustered with soft corals of all colors. The massive anemone garden found on the eastern side is the clear highlight of this dive site. Positioned in a channel, this colorful thila can be challenging with stronger currents, but may reward adventurous divers with close encounters from grey reef sharks.

The massive anemone garden on the eastern side is the clear highlight of this dive site. Positioned in a channel it can be difficult with stronger currents but rewarding with the occasional encounter of grey reef sharks.



## NORTH ARI ATOLL

**Gangehi pass** – A narrow perfect channel; fly with the current and encounter sharks, turtles and rays. Gangehi lagoon is right next to this channel, here we can encounter mantas and the occasional whaleshark at times.

**Kuda thila (nika)** – Kuda meaning small; this is a nice colourful thila with interesting marine life and beautiful corals, not ideal with strong current.

**Beyru madivaru** – A nice wall dive in a channel.

**Hafza thila** – The grey reef shark cleaning station! One of our 12 classics described above!

**Kari beyru thila (Protected Marine Area)** – An L shaped thila that has everything from sharks, rays, napoleons to the smaller critters like leaf fish.

**Dhigu thila** – The other side of kari beyru thila, this is also shaped like an L.

**Maaya thila (Protected Marine Area)** – A Maldivian legend! One of our 12 classics described above!

**Bathalaa thila** – A wonderful little thila with lots and lots of fish. Schools of bannerfish and batfish hang in the blue and sharks are cruising next to the reef. Don't forget to look out for the resident napoleon couple!

**Bathalaa maagaa kanthila** – Adrenaline packed shark cinema! One of our 12 classics described above!



**Fussaru** – A nice wall dive with lots of nice corals and chance of sharks and turtles.

**Tin thila** – Consists of 3 thilas situated right next to each other. Kuda (small), medu (medium) and bodu (big) thila. These thilas can also be dived individually if there is no current.

**Halaveli wreck** – A 38 metre long shipwreck that was sunk in 1991, it lays at 28 metres depth.

**Ellaidhoo thila** – A larger thila with lots of overhangs that hold wonderful corals. Look out for nurse sharks and stingrays in these overhangs!

**Ellaidhoo housereef** – A very nice wall with loads of overhangs, moray eels and even a little wreck.

## NORTH ARI ATOLL

### **Orimas thila (Protected Marine Area)**

– A wonderful small thila that boasts with fish life. Positioned in a channel it can be difficult with stronger currents.

**Kandolhu thila** – A small yet wonderful thila that takes just 5 minutes by boat to reach. Small things and beautiful corals we find here, ask us about frogfish!

**Fushifaru** – A nice wall dive in a channel.

**Fish head** – Another legendary Maldivian dive site! One of our 12 classics described above!

**Fesdu maaha** – A nice wall dive with stunning corals in the shallows.

**Hohola thila** – A beautiful thila full with colourful corals and fish! One of our 12 classics described above!

**Hohola faru** – The south side of the reef right next to hohola thila, lots of overhangs.

**Fesdu wreck** – One of the best recreational wreck dives in the world, right next to a beautiful thila! One of our 12 classics described above!

**Viligili Falhu** – The south side of the reef right next to fesdu wreck.

**Maalhoss thila** – Amazing hard and soft corals! One of our 12 classics described above!

**Donkalo thila** – Large thila with nice corals and chance of big stuff! One of our 12 classics described above!

**Manta point** – At certain times of the year you can find many mantas getting cleaned right between two large thilas. Strong currents are easy when you have a reef hook!

**Himendhoo kandu** – With strong currents a beautiful drift dive with amazing corals and chance of mantas.

**Himendhoo thila** – Beautiful thila with chance to see ANYTHING. One of our 12 classics described above!

More, more and more – we dive many more sites!



## RASDHOO ATOLL

**Hammerhead shark point** – Try and find the elusive hammerhead shark! One of our 12 classics described above!

**Madivaru** – A world class dive site in our opinion! Big numbers of sharks, rays, napoleon wrasse and millions of fish.

**Rasdho channel** – A dive for the advanced divers among us, a channel dive with sharks, sharks and more sharks!

**North channel / Manta point** – An excellent site during the winter months to see graceful mantas on these cleaning stations.

**Veligandu north** – An excellent site with lots of moray eels (including the honeycomb moray) and leaf fish.